

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0069] with the following amended paragraph:

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[0069] In an embodiment using a timer circuit 30, microprocessor 40, which receives play rate instructions stored in associated ROM 42, is programmed to initiate timer circuit 30 upon the start of the tournament and upon the conclusion and reset for subsequent play of each game 60 within a tournament. Once timer circuit 30 is activated, microprocessor 40 evaluates data from timer circuit 30 against a maximum permitted time interval between conclusion of play of a tournament game 60 and initiation of a subsequent play thereof. If a player does not initiate play of a new game 60 within a predetermined time interval dictated by the play rate parameters programmed into ROM 42, microprocessor 40 generates a signal to activate play of a new game 60. The automatic play of the gaming device is ~~superseded~~ superseded, however, if a player initiates play of a game 60 by activation of player input switch 20 (e.g., the player presses a "spin" or "play" button) prior to the expiration of the predetermined time interval. In that case, microprocessor 40 sends a signal responsive to the player input to switch 20 for the game 60 to operate immediately. Upon conclusion of the immediately preceding game 60 and if time is left in the tournament period, microprocessor 40 will reset and activate timer circuit 30. Timer circuit 30 may be deactivated by microprocessor 40 while the gaming machine is in conventional gaming (i.e., for play of a primary game), rather than tournament use